



**CITY OF SANTA BARBARA
CREEKS RESTORATION/WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT
CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES**

SPECIAL MEETING

April 21, 2010

David Gebhard Public Meeting Room, 630 Garden Street

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Moldaver called the meeting to order at 5:31 pm.

ROLL CALL

Committee members present: Chair Moldaver, Natasha Lohmus, Paul Bullock, Betsy Weber, Daniel Wilson

Committee members absent: none

Liaison members present: none

Liaison members absent: Councilmember Michael Self, Planning Commissioner Michael Jordan

Staff present: Creeks Restoration/Clean Water Manager Cameron Benson, Creeks Program Assistant Julie Kahrnoff

PUBLIC COMMENT

No one wished to speak

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion:

Committee members Weber/Bullock to approve the minutes of the special meeting of March 10, 2010.

Vote:

Unanimous voice vote

AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS

None

COMMITTEE MEMBER AND STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Benson announced that the 2010 Looking Good Santa Barbara Community Clean-Up will take place on Saturday, May 15th from 9:00am – 12:00pm; and informed the committee of the recent Los Angeles Times news article on the invasive New Zealand Mudsnail and the importance of preventing the mudsnail from entering Santa Barbara's creeks and streams.

Mr. Moldaver asked whether there would be gloves, trash bags, and snacks provided at the Community Clean-Up; and, where the article on the New Zealand Mudsnaills can be located.

Mr. Benson reported that supplies and snacks will be provided at the Community Clean-Up; and, that the New Zealand Mudsnaills article will be posted on the Creeks Division's website at www.sbcreeks.com.

Mr. Wilson arrived at 5:37pm.

Mr. Moldaver announced that the University of California, Santa Barbara will be holding a celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Environmental Studies program on Saturday, April 24th at 9:00am on campus.

Mr. Benson reported that the Budget Subcommittee met on April 6th to discuss the proposed Fiscal Year 2010 budget; and, that the Watershed Subcommittee met on April 8th to discuss the Plan Santa Barbara General Plan Update, which the full Committee will receive a presentation on today.

7. BUSINESS ITEMS

a. Plan Santa Barbara Draft Policy Documents & EIR

Recommendation:

That the Committee provide comments on the following *Plan Santa Barbara (PlanSB)* General Plan Update Policy documents as well as the associated Draft EIR.

Documents:

Staff Report – April 2010

Speakers:

John Ledbetter, Principal Planner

Committee Questions/Discussion:

Committee members asked questions regarding whether there will be free Plan SB compact discs available for interested community members, where this information is available, and where comments can be directed.

Mr. Ledbetter reported that all Plan SB documents can be found online at www.youplansb.org, and that compact discs and hard copies are available in the Planning Division offices upstairs at 630 Garden Street. Community members are welcome to attend the Planning Commission meeting on April 28th in Council Chambers to make comments, or they can submit written comments through the website, via email to JLedbetter@SantaBarbaraCA.gov, or via mail to John Ledbetter at PO Box 1990, Santa Barbara, CA 93102 by May 17th.

Mr. Benson noted that the Committee has already sent in two comment letters in the Plan Santa Barbara process, and that tonight is a good opportunity to ask any clarifying questions and to make any comments. At the next Watershed Subcommittee meeting, Subcommittee members will prepare a draft comment letter for the full Committee to review on May 12th.

Committee members asked questions regarding the focus on endangered species in the creeks, and whether they are a priority; and, how many years the updated General Plan is intended to cover.

Mr. Ledbetter reported that in the current document, there is not an update for the Environmental Resources Element of the General Plan, but that over time the impacts on endangered species will be covered more in depth; and, that typically General Plans are for 20 years, but that some items such as climate change may go out as far as 50 years.

Committee members asked questions regarding Plan SB's definition of sustainable neighborhoods, what the MODA (Mobility-Oriented Development Area) Concept Principles are; and, whether the creek corridors are considered part of the greenbelt, buffers, or setbacks concept; and, how specific the language is on policies.

Mr. Ledbetter reported that all neighborhoods are different and require different sustainability guidelines and specific planning for each neighborhood; that the MODA Principles are trying to foster sustainable neighborhoods in a more urban setting, encouraging biking and walking; and, that the creeks are part of the buffers, and are an integral part of the neighborhoods; and, the language within each policy is different and would have to be examined closely for specificity.

Committee members asked questions regarding where the buffer zones will be put if when new housing is developed; what is considered affordable if the process entails demolishing and then rebuilding; and, whether there would be requirements for rain collection and storm water infiltration.

Mr. Ledbetter reported that the buffer zones will be placed in more urban and sustainable areas, along commercial corridors in the downtown area, and that there needs to be parks and open space within walking distance; that the concept is not to add more square footage, but to add new housing in the place of older buildings or parking lots; and, that the Storm Water Management Program contains policies that speak to green building and encourage sustainable programs.

Committee members asked questions regarding keeping Santa Barbara a small town, and whether that would require a limit on the number of chain stores and multi-national companies; and, whether the appearance of the building is more important than who is in the building.

Mr. Ledbetter reported that limiting and regulating chain stores is a difficult and controversial issue, and that maintaining community character is more in terms of the physical, built environment; that a building's look is an important part of the community's economical and social diversity; and, that affordable housing is more important to people than what kind of shops there are.

Committee members asked questions regarding whether the Plan can diagram rainfall that will nourish the creeks and the community and maintain a water supply for more than 20 years; and, whether there is scientific data on rainfall noted in the Environmental Impact Report.

Mr. Ledbetter reported that climate change is happening, and we cannot exactly predict how it will unfold since this is the first time the Plan has included an emphasis on climate change; and, that by monitoring previous years' drought cycles and state water, we can design an adaptive management program that is monitored and adjusted over time.

Committee members asked questions regarding rising sea levels, and whether there has been discussion of sea walls or how to protect Santa Barbara from a sea level rise; and, whether there is an update to the Local Coastal Plan included in the Plan.

Mr. Ledbetter reported that sea walls would be antithetical to the Local Coastal Plan; that the Plan needs to be able to adapt to change and start to shift facilities that are within flood zones, such as the wastewater treatment plant; and, that the Coastal Commission will receive a copy of the Draft EIR, but that typically the Local Coastal Plan amendment would take place at a later date; and, that sea walls are permitted to protect existing structures, not new structures.

Mr. Ledbetter noted that the Creeks Advisory Committee is welcome to select someone from the committee to testify at the Planning Commission Meeting and would like to thank the Committee for their time and input.

Committee members asked questions regarding the amount of public involvement and comments in the Plan SB process; and, whether the greater population of Santa Barbara has been represented.

Mr. Ledbetter reported that the first phase was information gathering and baseline work, and during the public outreach effort in 2007 there was a

lot of valuable information and feedback from community groups; that during the policy development phase, a number of people have continued to follow the process; and, that the most challenging part is to maintain the momentum with a cross-section of the community who don't typically follow the planning process.

b. Recommended Fiscal Year 2011 Budget

Recommendation:

That the Committee recommends approval of the proposed Creeks Division Fiscal Year 2011 Budget to the Park and Recreation Commission and the City Council.

Documents:

Staff Report – April 2010
PowerPoint Presentation – April 2010

Speakers:

Cameron Benson, Creeks Restoration/Clean Water Manager

Committee Questions/Discussion:

Ms. Lohmus noted that because of Measure B revenue, the Creeks Division has been able to tap outside funding sources to do projects that bring additional money into the community.

Mr. Benson explained that the dedicated funding source of Measure B has allowed the Creeks Division to be competitive in grant applications, and to provide high quality projects and continue to maintain projects after construction; that during lean economic times we may have the unique opportunity to be more competitive because other agencies may not have matching funds available for projects; and, that construction costs are coming down, so we may also be able to get more for our money.

Committee members asked questions regarding the percentage of the budget spent on salaries, and how it compares to other City departments.

Mr. Benson reported that generally speaking, the Creeks Division percentage is low for salaries and benefits compared to other City departments .

Motion:

Committee members Lohmus/Wilson to recommend approval of the proposed Creeks Division Fiscal Year 2011 Budget to the Park and Recreation Commission and the City Council.

Vote:

Unanimous voice vote

ADJOURNMENT

Motion:

Committee members Wilson/Lohmus to adjourn.

Chair Moldaver adjourned the meeting at 7:17 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Cameron Benson
Creeks Restoration/Clean Water Manager